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Letter dated 29 September 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the thirty-sixth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The report covers the period from 23 August to 22 September 2016.

On the matter of the destruction of chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, no progress has been made. I take note of the statement by the Director-General that the poor security situation on the ground is continuing to prevent safe access by either the Syrian Arab Republic or the OPCW secretariat to the remaining hangar and the two stationary above-ground facilities.

With regard to the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic and subsequent submissions, and since the time of my previous letter (S/2016/748), the Director-General has received a reply to his own letter to the Syrian National Authority, in which he urged the Syrian Arab Republic to provide scientifically and technically plausible explanations in response to a list of questions relating to various facets of its chemical weapons programme. In this regard, I note that the Syrian Arab Republic has addressed some of the questions raised, but that the OPCW secretariat intends to follow up with further questions.

It is with great concern that I must once again recall the continuing allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, in addition to my grave concern at the apparent erosion of the taboo against their use in this conflict. International norms cannot be permitted to weaken any further and those responsible must be held accountable. I take note that the Director-General of OPCW dispatched a team to Damascus from 4 to 9 September 2016 and that it continues to collect and study all available information relating to recent allegations.

The OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism submitted its third report to the Security Council on 24 August 2016 (S/2016/738/Rev.1), pursuant to resolution 2235 (2015). In that report, the Leadership Panel recommended further investigations into three cases: Kafr Zita (18 April 2014), Qmenas (16 March 2015) and Binnish (24 March 2015). During the reporting period, the Mechanism continued to investigate those three cases, including by receiving and analysing information, such as forensics, that had been requested before the submission of the report.

On 15 September 2016, I indicated to the Security Council that the Mechanism required additional time to complete its report to the Council. The Council, in these exceptional circumstances, approved the request and granted a short extension of the mandate, until 31 October. The Mechanism intends to submit its fourth, and final, report to the Council on 21 October, which will include the assessment of the Leadership Panel and conclusions on the three remaining cases.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

Annex

Letter dated 26 September 2016 from the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 August to 22 September 2016 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet Üzümcü

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016) noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. This, the thirty-sixth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions, and includes information relevant to the period from 23 August to 22 September 2016.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

5. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 24 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. However, the poor security situation continues to prevent safe access both for the Syrian Arab Republic to destroy the remaining aircraft hangar, which stands ready

to accept the explosive charges, and for the Secretariat to confirm the condition of the two stationary above-ground facilities.

(b) On 14 September 2016, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its thirty-fourth monthly report (EC-83/P/NAT.3, dated 14 September 2016) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

6. As reported previously, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decision EC-81/DEC.4

7. In an effort to make progress in clarifying the outstanding issues with regard to the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration, the Director-General addressed a letter dated 27 July 2016 to the Head of the National Authority of the Syrian Arab Republic. Through this letter, the Syrian Arab Republic was urged to provide scientifically and technically plausible explanations to a list of questions related to various facets of its chemical weapons programme.

8. A reply from the Syrian Arab Republic was received on 31 August 2016. In it, the Syrian Arab Republic provided some of the information with regard to the questions raised in in the Director-General's letter. The Secretariat is in the process of addressing an additional letter to the Syrian Arab Republic containing follow-up questions.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

9. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

10. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

11. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the Declaration Assessment Team. As at the cut-off date of this report, contribution agreements totalling EUR 7.8 million had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America, and the European Union. Pledges from other donors have been made and are currently being processed.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

12. The FFM continued to collect and study all available information relating to recent allegations of use of chemical weapons, with a particular focus on three alleged incidents in the Aleppo and Idlib Governorates of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The FFM's work will continue to be guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015).

13. As reported previously, the Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic on 16 August 2016 requesting the Director-General to dispatch a team to undertake an investigation of an alleged incident. In response to this request, a team was dispatched from 4 to 9 September 2016 to Damascus, where it was provided with a package of documentation and secured 19 samples gathered from the site of the alleged incident. The team is currently reviewing the documentation with a view to deploying for a further investigation in the near future.

14. The Head of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, under cover of a letter to the Director-General dated 30 August 2016, provided the third report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and requested that the Council be informed thereof. The report was submitted to the United Nations Security Council on 24 August 2016 pursuant to Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), and has since been made available to the Council in accordance with paragraph 11 of that resolution.

Conclusion

15. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will continue to be on the implementation of Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and the activities of the FFM, as well as on the destruction and verification of the remaining aircraft hangar, confirmation of the status of the two stationary above-ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.